

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 SIG-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00
EB-08 L-03 PRS-01 /072 R

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R 152219Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA FOUR LINE FIVE OMITTED)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XD, XE, US

SUBJECT: EAST ASIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD US NORMALIZATION

WITH VIETNAM

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. FOLLOWING IS INR ANALYSIS OF MARCH 12, ON EAST ASIAN ATTITUDES TOWARDS US NORMALIZATION, ON WHICH POST COMMENTS WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

2. ALL EAST ASIAN NATIONS WELCOME IN PRINCIPLE NORMALIZATION OF US RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM. HOWEVER, MOST SOUTHEAST ASIANS ARE CONCERNED THAT US AID, TRADE, AND INVESTMENT MIGHT BUILD UP VIETNAM'S CAPACITY FOR SUBVERSION.

3. ALL COUNTRIES OF THE REGION WOULD BE CONCERNED IF NORMALIZATION, COMBINED WITH OTHER US MOVES IN THE AREA, APPEARED TO SIGNAL A SHARP DECREASE IN US INTEREST IN THE AREA.

4. THE SOUTHEAST ASIANS, IN GENERAL, BELIEVE US RELATIONS WITH HANOI WILL:

--HELP BALANCE THE SOVIET PRESENCE IN VIETNAM AND ITS AMBITIONS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA;

--TEND TO OFFSET ANY FUTURE CHINESE EFFORT TO EXPAND ITS INFLUENCE IN THE REGION;

"

--ACT AS A BRAKE ON ANY VIETNAMESE INTEREST IN LARGE-SCALE INFILTRATION OR SUBVERSION OF NEIGHBORING STATES;

--IN GENERAL, PROMOTE STABILITY IN THE REGION.

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5. AT THE SAME TIME, MOST SOUTHEAST ASIANS ARE CONCERNED THAT US AID, TRADE AND POSSIBLY INVESTMENT IN VIETNAM WILL:

--RESULT IN CORRESPONDINGLY LESS FROM THE US IN THE ASEAN AREA;

--BE A CATALYST FOR INCREASED JAPANESE AND WEST EUROPEAN AID, TRADE, AND INVESTMENT IN VIETNAM;

--STRENGTHEN THE SRV ECONOMICALLY AND THEREFORE MAKE IT A GREATER MENACE TO NON-COMMUNIST SOUTHEAST ASIA.

6. INDONESIA AND THAILAND SEEM THE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF NORMALIZATION.

7. THE INDONESIAN MILITARY SEE A THREAT OF SUBVERSION FROM FOREIGN COMMUNISTS. THEY ALSO FEAR THAT A STRONG VIETNAM WILL THWART INDONESIA'S OWN AMBITIONS FOR REGIONAL

LEADERSHIP.

8. THE THAIS, AS THE SRV'S CLOSEST NEIGHBORS, ARE DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF VIETNAM'S LONG-TERM INTENTIONS. THEY ARE ALSO AFRAID THE US MOVE WILL BE AT THE EXPENSE OF US/ THAI FRIENDSHIP AND SECURITY COOPERATION. THE THAIS WANT A REAFFIRMATION OF US SUPPORT AND AN INCREASE IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO PARALLEL THE DEVELOPMENT OF US RELATIONS WITH HANOI.

9. MALAYSIA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND BURMA SHOW LITTLE CONCERN AT ALL, AND SINGAPORE STANDS SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS.

10. MALAYSIA FEELS THAT NORMALIZATION WILL HELP BRING THE SRV INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY AND MAKE IT MORE RESPONSIVE AND COOPERATIVE IN THE REGION.

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11. THE PHILIPPINES, WHILE LOOKING FAVORABLY UPON NORMALIZATION, IS CONCERNED THAT IT MIGHT REDUCE US SUPPORT FOR THE PHILIPPINE SIDE IN CONFLICTING CLAIMS TO THE SPRATLYS.

12. SINGAPORE IS ALSO SUSPICIOUS OF SRV INTENTIONS, BUT FEELS THAT NORMALIZATION WITH THE US IS GOOD IN PRINCIPLE AND INEVITABLE. MOREOVER, SINGAPORE STANDS TO GAIN MORE ECONOMICALLY THAN THE OTHER SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS FROM THE LIFTING OF THE US TRADE EMBARGO AGAINST VIETNAM.

13. THE PRC FEELS THAT NORMALIZATION, AS WELL AS INCREASED VIETNAMESE CONTACTS WITH THE WEST, WOULD MOVE VIETNAM FURTHER FROM DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR. HOWEVER, THE PRC SHARES THE CONCERN OF OTHER ASIAN STATES ABOUT FUTURE VIETNAMESE DOMINANCE IN THE REGION, AND THUS WOULD WATCH CAREFULLY THE AMOUNTS AND KINDS OF US AID AND INVESTMENT WHICH VIETNAM ACQUIRED.

14. JAPAN WOULD WELCOME A US MOVE TOWARD HANOI AS A POTENTIALLY STABILIZING DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD ALSO ENHANCE THE PROSPECTS FOR ITS EXPANSION OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH THE SRV.

15. SOUTH KOREA WOULD NOT BE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY US-VIETNAMESE NORMALIZATION, BUT WOULD WONDER IF IT PRESAGED US MOVEMENT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA.
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